

Transition from early years



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This assignment is based upon my understanding of child development and children's learning, considering the curriculum for the Early Years and the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage/Key Stage One. I propose to outline a rationale for effectively continuing children's learning, from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year One and include strategies to support transitions, effective curriculum delivery and links between the EYFS and the National Curriculum.

Throughout the assignment I will refer not only in general but also to how my research has helped me as a practitioner help my setting to effectively continue children's learning. Looking at Government reports about transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage One, Ofsted nationally identified issues between reception and Key stage One practice. In 2004 they produced a report entitled Transition from the Reception Year to Year 1 (Ofsted 2004). Findings suggested that there was not enough consideration relating to the Foundation Stage and Year One curriculum.

Ofsted recommended the following 'point for action' " Schools which admit pupils to the Foundation Stage should ensure that learning experiences in Year One build upon practical approaches and structured play in Year R (Reception) (Ofsted 2004: 3) The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and research from the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) identified the biggest challenge to transition, as the EYFS curriculum is play based, Key Stage One is a more structured curriculum.

They found that some children were worried about moving into Year One because of the amount of work expected and the length of time they were

expected to sit and listen to the teacher. The government decided to produce a guidance document entitled Continuing the Learning Journey (NAA 2005) which is intended to support schools and Local Authorities in working towards improving transitions between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. The Foundation Co-ordinator and Year One teacher from school attended this course about two years ago and have tried to improve the transitions between our unit and Key Stage One.

More recently the Head and Deputy Head teachers have attended several courses relating to the Proposal of the New Primary Curriculum. Sir Jim Rose has proposed a number of changes to the New Curriculum which will impact on transition and include moving away from Primary subjects and towards new 'areas of learning' that are intended to be linked to the EYFS. A number of staff meetings have taken place within our school discussing the review of the New Primary curriculum with all Teachers and hopefully will be implemented across the whole school as soon as possible this depending upon the forthcoming election.

Unit meetings have started to take place enabling Foundation Staff and Year One staff to look at how the EYFS and the New Primary Curriculum objectives overlap/link enabling Year One teachers to continue each individual child's learning journey. All teachers know that children are different, each one having their own 'Unique' individual needs. When a child leaves the Foundation Stage and enters Key stage one, they have not necessarily achieved all the objectives in their profile and therefore are not ready to access the Year one National Curriculum.

I can see little benefit to any child beginning Year One Numeracy and Literacy objectives, in particular, with children who are not ready in terms of ability and maturity. It makes far better sense to begin Year One with the children's profiles and to allow time for each child to achieve all the profile objectives before launching into the more demanding Year One objectives. If you look at the PSRN and CLL objectives for the latter part of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Numeracy and Literacy for Year One term one, there is an overlap, with the Early Years Foundation Stage goals including some of the National Curriculum level One.

Similarly, there are objectives in the Early Years Foundation Stage profiles in other areas of learning which overlap with the Year one objectives in Science, History and Geography, ICT, Design technology and RE - KUW. PSHE and citizenship - PSED. Music, art, drama and creativity - CD and Physical development - PD. In addition, simply because a child moves from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage One shouldn't mean that the curriculum ceases being active. Young children learn best when they are engaged in worthwhile, hands on experiences.

On the same premise, play does not have to end but it needs to be teacher initiated and led in order to be of much educational value, for instance, children are unlikely to spell words correctly, if there isn't a teacher to help sound out the letters in the word. Ros Bayley and Sally Featherstone are writers on teaching and learning have written a book entitled Smooth Transitions. In it they state ' a three year olds brain is twice as active as an adult brain and this level of activity continues to the age of 9 or 10.

Children develop 50% of their eventual ability to learn before the age of 4 and another 30% before they are 8. Adult interaction and physical activity continue to make a massive difference to learning during childhood' When measuring the difference between boys and girls they found that ' most girls have made sufficient links to their brains to begin the complex skills of reading and writing by the time they are four and a half while in most boys it is nearer to six' They also say that research from all over the world tells us that children learn best from doing and that boys are " doers".

If we want boys to succeed in the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage One we must allow them to develop through an active curriculum. Bayley and Featherstone conclude that everything we know about the brain is consistent with the guidance for the Foundation Stage. We must use that knowledge in Key Stage One and use it to shape how we teach rather than what we teach. There will also be children in Foundation Stage who by the end of the year are already accessing aspects of Year One curriculum.

This is sometimes of particular significance for the summer-born Foundation Stage children, who may turn five right at the end of the Foundation Stage year therefore close liaison between staff regarding the academic and personal aspects of each child's development is absolutely vital. The detailed knowledge that support staff have of the children as people and learners should be shared. Time and effort invested in this will help with differentiation, as well as children's wellbeing, on entry into Year One.

As part of my research, I visited the Year One class teacher in our school to establish how she plans for the transition from the Early Years Foundation

Stage into Year One and to get her views about whether the transition process the school has in place is a 'seamless journey' or if there was more staff could do to improve this. One of the Year One teacher's worries as I am sure is the same with most Year One teachers is the pressure she feels under to achieve outcomes to get children ready for Year Two Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). But as from this year our school has abolished not only Year two but Year Six SATs as well.

This will ease the pressure enabling her to concentrate more on the transition period and continuing each child's learning journey. The transition process we have in place for starting Nursery and reception is, I believe a 'seamless journey'. The Early Years Foundation Unit recognise that the transition from the home to Nursery and Nursery to Reception class is an important step in a child's school life and it is our intention to make this a positive experience for every child. We endeavour to provide our children with a smooth transition from home to Nursery and Nursery to Reception Class. (Yewdale Early Years Foundation Unit brochure 2009/10) however my opinion is that the transition from The Early Years Foundation Unit to Year One has not been successful, perhaps this is because that since I have been working in the Unit, big changes have taken place; The Foundation co coordinator leaves, an NQT takes over reception class and the role of EYFS coordinator (who has made a huge impact to the unit and who has become a great team Leader and friend), a new head teacher takes over the school and the Nursery and Reception classes merge to become a Early Years Foundation Unit and the Year One teacher is on maternity leave.

This module I believe has helped me to make a positive contribution to the whole school approach about how we are going to help the children leaving the Early Years Foundation Unit have a smooth transition into Year one.

Meetings have taken place between the Early Years coordinator and foundation staff and the Year One teacher and teaching assistant to discuss as a team, strategies to support transitions and to imply them during the summer term.

Taking into consideration, the aim of the EYFS, is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes therefore by looking at the Every Child Matters document focusing on the five outcomes be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being I believe that by ensuring that children grow up to lead a safe, happy, healthy and successful life the transition strategy process should be; Be Healthy: Guidelines in place to ensure pupils physical and emotional health.

Children are supported through the transition period by ensuring that Year One Staff have a full and accurate picture of each child's needs prior to teaching them. During the Summer Term children have an opportunity to visit their new classes and meet their new teachers and stay for short visits and for the Year One teacher to visit in the reception class where the children are in familiar secure surroundings. Year One children have timetabled sessions in the Reception Outdoor area, the Year One class does not have access to their own outdoor area, and this enables physical activity to take place in familiar surroundings. Stay Safe: The school to provide a safe environment and ensures that pupils know the school's expectations for

conduct and behaviour. Foundation Stage Unit Classes use the Key Stage One playground at lunch times throughout the school year and at playtimes during the Summer Term. This enables the children to become familiar with the rules and routines of Year One rules. From the Spring Term children in the Foundation Stage, reception age children only have access to morning playtimes and dinnertime playtimes.

Enjoy and Achieve: The school provides an environment and atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and happy, and therefore can enjoy and achieve within the school environment. Children should see similar areas of provision in the Year One classroom e. g. role play, construction, sand/water, writing materials, well organised and accessible resources, staff working together, children should experience a similar environment. Learning through first hand experiences and being able to learn outside.

The Year One class has got similar continuous provision areas to the Early Years Foundation Unit, which includes role play, sand/water, creative, construction, small world, reading area and access to laptops. They do not have access to their own outdoor area, this is the case in many schools, but do have three outdoor 'playtimes' a day two with Reception and Key stage one and one at lunch time with the whole school. Resources in Year One should be built up to reflect the Reception classes and more kinaesthetic experiences have been woven into the curriculum.

The Foundation Unit and Year One class conduct PSHE and Circle Time Sessions using the SEAL/SEAD Programme and provide opportunities to share children's thoughts and feelings regarding transition into Year One and

to incorporate a variety of learning styles into Foundation Stage and Year One planning to engage all children, I think it is very important as a practitioner to take time to find out how the children in your care feel, therefore by giving them opportunities to express their feelings through drawing, painting or writing will help us to make their journey as seamless as possible.

Make a Positive Contribution: Pupils are supported and helped to develop socially and emotionally through Circle Time (SEAL), classroom rules and routines and the schools' Behaviour Policy. From Reception children are able to represent their class through the forum of the School Council so that pupils' voices are heard. These meetings are held weekly and discussed with the rest of the school during assembly times. **Achieve Economic Well-Being:** Aim to provide good quality education and to prepare pupils for the future.

Looking at the continuity of teaching and learning an effective curriculum delivery, in the Summer Term Reception Classes should begin to take on some elements of the more formal aspects of learning, whilst still engaging in active learning experiences. This continues in the Autumn Term of Year One and beyond. Reception and Year One staff liaise closely during the Autumn Term to ensure that the needs of individual children are fully understood in context and therefore met, within the educational setting of the classroom and the school.

The new primary curriculum builds on the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and promotes play-based learning. In the early stage the content of the curriculum is generic to the area of learning therefore the

curriculum is now more reflective of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and builds on and extends the experiences children have had during the Foundation Stage by planning for a variety of learning styles, such as role play, and imaginative play, visits and visitors, practical activities.

Children's personal and independent learning should be encouraged through opportunity to choose activities and resources, so encouraging their ability to make decisions and own their own work. This is already happening in the Foundation Unit and so supports the transition process. Data from the Foundation Stage Profiles is used to inform planning and assessment processes in Year One.

The Year one teacher will look at the Foundation Stage profiles and start by 'filling in the gaps' as stated where children have not attained the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception years, Year 1 teachers should ensure gradual and smooth transition from the foundation ethos to the more structures, teacher-directed ethos of Key Stage,(Lesley Staggs, 2004) this can only be done if their learning journeys including foundation profile data are forwarded to her and that each child's learning and personal needs are fully discussed with the Year One teacher.

The teacher can then start to find out as much as she can about the child as a learner and to use the information to plan the next steps. Children in the Reception class with Special Educational Needs who receive one to one support or are part of our morning Nurture group, the transition will be handled sensitively to ensure support continues in Year One if appropriate. It is equally important that parents/carers are informed and asked about how

they feel about the transition not only for their children but how they feel themselves.

All families are important and should be welcomed and valued in all settings (EYFS 2. 2, 2008) Schools should have a very strong ethos of volunteer parental help within the classroom and in the school as a whole. This is well established in our Foundation Stage Unit and continues throughout Key Stage One and beyond. This tradition supports children in their transition between Key Stages. Parents/carers in the Early Years Foundation Unit and Key Stage One are offered the opportunity to attend a Family Learning free 14 hour course to help them to recognise how children develop number skills through play.

It is designed to support parents in helping their child to achieve their full potential at school. During the Autumn term there will be a literacy based course held. Parents/carers will from this year receive a Key Stage One Booklet produced by the school at the beginning of the Autumn Term that supports parents in understanding the changes their child will experience, and so be able to support them during and after the summer school holidays in making the transition. Parent's Evenings are held three times a year given opportunities for staff parents/carers to discuss child's development and any concerns.

In addition to this the Foundation Unit encourages an ' Open Door' policy where parents are welcome to come and discuss their concerns and their child's needs at any time during the school year. This applies in Year One too. It is also important to remember that after the transition has taken

place, Foundation Stage and Key Stage One Co-ordinators work with their teams to ensure that the transition Policy is implemented effectively and Foundation Stage and Key Stage One staff meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the progress of both groups and individual children in both Key Stages.

In conclusion, I feel that by carrying out research before and during this module has helped me to understand the great importance of a smooth transition for children in the Foundation Unit moving to Key stage One and not only does it involve the children but also various staff members and parents/carers. It involves time, thought and commitment to ensure that it is a positive experience for all children and can only be a success by Foundation Staff and Year One staff working closely together.

We are still in the early stages in our school at introducing new ways of working together as a team to produce a seam-free transition for every child, I think so far so good! We are coming to the end of Summer term one and strategies are in place for Summer Term Two including a draft copy of a Transition Policy. Unless the transition is well managed children may become disengaged, learning could be impeded and there may be a consequent rise in poor behaviour as children struggle to adapt to a different and more formal approach. (DFES 2004)